

The very work bears witness of itself, for the Spirit of God attends it.

The message of the proclamation will comfort parents who may be questioning their roles in the home. It will bring security to children as they are raised by parents who love them and un-

derstand their divine destiny. And it will bring lasting happiness to the young woman who spoke to me as she understands and fulfills the role designed for her by an all-wise and loving Father in Heaven. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Sister Patricia P. Pinegar

Trusting in the Lord after a son's death

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Brothers and sisters, I love the Lord and trust in Him with all of my heart. I know He lives and loves each of us. I know our Father in Heaven has a perfect plan for us. As we follow this plan and the example of our Savior, we can find peace in this troubled world, our hearts can be filled with hope, and we will receive the direction we need.

While we were serving a mission in England, our 17-year-old son, Cory, was killed in a car accident. We were able to come home to Utah for his funeral, and then we immediately returned to England to finish our mission. It was a very tender time for our entire family.

One day, shortly after returning to England, I was walking down the street and an acquaintance who had heard of the death of our son said to me: "Well, what do you think of your God now? You are serving a full-time mission for Him, and He has taken your son." I was both shocked and hurt. I felt so sorry for this person who did not understand Heavenly Father's plan.

The difficult experience of my son's death helped me identify and rejoice in the blessings of peace, hope, and direction—blessings that all who truly accept and live the gospel of Jesus Christ may enjoy. I can bear witness to the words of Elder Richard G. Scott: "Please learn that as you wrestle with a challenge and feel sadness because of it, you can simultaneously have peace and rejoicing" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 20; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 17).

What are some specific things we can do to have these blessings of peace, hope, and direction in our lives? May I share with you three things that have helped me.

Trust in God's plan

First, we must have complete trust in our Father's plan of happiness and our Savior's part in that plan. Trusting in His plan gave me peace during the time following our son's death. I knew where our son was, and I knew Heavenly Father loved him. I had a perfect hope that because of the Savior's Atonement Cory lived and we would be together again as an eternal family. I also had direction. I knew what I needed to do and what our family needed to do to be together forever.

Commandments tether us to God

The second thing that has helped me receive these blessings is the principle of courageous obedience. I am so grateful for God's gift of laws and commandments. Peace, hope, and direction are outcomes of striving to live the teachings of Jesus and obeying His laws and commandments. The scriptures teach, "Great peace have they which love thy law" (Psalm 119:165). They also teach that "he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:23).

While Brother Pinegar served as president of the Provo Missionary Training Center, as you can imagine, we often talked to the missionaries about the feelings of happiness and peace that accompany courageous obedience to true principles. We talked of the influence of the Holy Ghost that comes to those who are obedient. We encouraged the missionaries to make obedience their quest. I enjoyed telling them the story of the little boy who went to the park with his father to fly a kite.

The boy was very young. It was his first experience with kite flying. His father helped him, and after several attempts the kite was in the air. The boy ran and let out more string, and soon the kite was flying high. The little boy was so excited; the kite was beautiful. Eventually there was no more string left to allow the kite to go higher. The boy said to his father, "Daddy, let's cut the string and let the kite go; I want to see it go higher and higher."

His father said, "Son, the kite won't go higher if we cut the string."

"Yes, it will," responded the little boy. "The string is holding the kite down; I can feel it." The father handed a pocket-knife to his son. The boy cut the string. In a matter of seconds the kite was out of control. It darted here and there and finally landed in a broken heap. That was

difficult for the boy to understand. He felt certain the string was holding the kite down.

The commandments and laws of God are like the kite string. They lead us and guide us upward. Obedience to these laws gives us peace, hope, and direction.

Heed the promptings of the Spirit

The third thing we can do to receive these blessings of peace, hope, and direction is to learn to respond to the promptings of the Holy Ghost and acknowledge to the Lord our gratitude for this great gift.

I helped take care of Grandma Pinegar a few Sundays ago. Grandma is 99 and very frail. She is blind and quite deaf, and recently it has become difficult for her to talk in more than a whisper. Her little body is so bent over that there is not much room in her lungs for air.

I leaned close to her and asked, "Grandma, tell me how the gospel has blessed your life." She whispered softly and shared her gratitude for the promptings and guidance she had received from the Holy Ghost.

When her second child, James, was 18 months old, he and his older brother were playing outside and she was watching them from the window. Suddenly she couldn't see him and ran from the house, calling and searching frantically. There was water in the irrigation ditch that shouldn't have been there, and she searched along the edge of the ditch and could see nothing. She ran for the hired hands to come and help and ran back to where the ditch went through a long culvert. Running to the other end of the culvert, she saw two little shoes, and pulled on them. When she had her son in her arms, she was prompted to clasp her hands together and place them under his stomach and carry him in front of her in this way, using her knee to hold some of his weight. She ran toward the

road, crying for help. The promptings she received to carry him in such an unnatural manner saved his life.

Center homes and Primaries on Christ

Brothers and sisters, I am personally grateful for the promptings we received as a Primary presidency. During the general conference when we were sustained, President Gordon B. Hinckley described some of the terrible atrocities that have been inflicted on children throughout the world. We read in newspapers and periodicals of the evil influences that are invading our homes.

As a new and very concerned Primary presidency, we prayed and searched the scriptures and were led to a verse in Isaiah that describes conditions during the Millennium: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord" (Isaiah 11:9). That was exactly what we wanted to have happen. We didn't want any child to be hurt or destroyed, but we didn't want to wait for the Millennium. We wanted that to happen right now. If our Primaries were full of the knowledge of the Lord, if our homes were full of the knowledge of the Lord, there would be peace and righteousness and the children would not be hurt in any way. We prayed to know how we could help that happen and were led to 2 Nephi 25:26. Our homes and our Primaries will be full of the knowledge of the Lord when "we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ."

We are so grateful for the peace and hope these scriptures gave us and for the direction we received through the Holy Ghost to encourage Primary leaders to have Christ-centered Primaries.

Brothers and sisters, let us rejoice in the blessings of peace, hope, and direction, blessings that so many of our Father's children do not enjoy. When we experience these great blessings in our

own lives, let us help others experience them also, especially the children. To paraphrase the words of the Savior, "And when thou art converted, strengthen [your children]" (Luke 22:32).

"All thy children shall be taught of the Lord"

The scriptural theme for Primary is "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (3 Nephi 22:13). The world is not a safe place. It is not a place where children will feel peace, hope, and direction unless they are taught to love and follow the Savior. Please help them know that these great blessings can be theirs, and show them what they need to do to receive these blessings.

I am so very grateful for the opportunity I have had to serve in Primary. I love my counselors, Sister Anne Wirthlin and Sister Susan Warner. We have been one in our desire to serve and bless the children of the Church. We believe that Christ-centered Primaries can help parents as they teach their children the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the only knowledge that will give our children peace, hope, and direction. I am grateful to our faithful, dedicated board members and capable office staff and thank our priesthood leaders, who have taught and inspired us. I am grateful for the new Primary presidency sustained at this conference. I offer them my love and support. My most sincere thanks and love go to my precious family and especially to my sweetheart for his unfailing love and support.

I acknowledge the goodness and kindness of my Savior in every part of my life. The blessings of peace, hope, and direction that I have identified are only three of the many ways my life is blessed because of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As expressed in the words of a Primary song,

I feel my Savior's love
 And know that he will bless me.
 I offer him my heart;
 My shepherd he will be.
 He knows I will follow him,
 Give all my life to him.
 I feel my Savior's love,
 The love he freely gives me.
 ["I Feel My Savior's Love," *Children's
 Songbook*, 74-75]

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Take Time to Be Holy."

President Hinckley

Elder L. Aldin Porter of the Presidency of the Seventy has spoken to us, followed by Sister Patricia P. Pinegar. The choir then sang "Take Time to Be Holy."

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve will now speak to us, following which it will be my pleasure to address you.

Following my remarks, this session will conclude with the choir singing "Prayer Is the Soul's Sincere Desire." The benediction will then be given by Elder Merrill J. Bateman of the Seventy.

Elder Russell M. Nelson

Valuing the Book of Mormon

Not long after my call to serve as one of the Twelve Apostles, I was summoned to the office of the President of our Quorum, President Ezra Taft Benson. He expressed deep concern that members of the Church did not fully appreciate the value of the Book of Mormon. With emotion in his voice, he read to me from the 84th section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"Your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received—

"Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation."¹

By that time, President Benson had completely captured my attention. He then concluded his admonition:

"And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon."²

I shall never forget that lesson. Since then, President Howard W. Hunter, President Gordon B. Hinckley, and many other leaders of the Church have continued to extol the Book of Mormon to people throughout the world.

The Book of Mormon's primary purpose

I would like to add my testimony of the divinity of this book. I have read it many times. I have also read much that has been written about it. Some authors have focused upon its stories, its people, or its vignettes of history. Others have been intrigued by its language structure or its records of weapons, geography, animal life, techniques of building, or systems of weights and measures.

Interesting as these matters may be, study of the Book of Mormon is most rewarding when one focuses on its *primary* purpose—to testify of Jesus Christ. By comparison, all other issues are incidental.